

Rail Topic Group conference call Tuesday, October 6, 1998 11:30 a.m-12:30 p.m. EDT

Participants on the call:

- Kevin Blackwell, FRA
- Mike Butler, UETC
- Ray English, DOE
- Robert Fronczak, AAR
- Daren Gilbert, State of NV
- William Naughton, ComEd
- Thor Strong, State of MI

The meeting commenced at approximately 11:30 a.m. EDT. Mr. Butler began the call by noting that he had distributed the initial draft of the Introduction and Sections 1 and 2 of the TEC/WG WIPP-PIG Rail Companion and solicited any general comments concerning the document thus far, noting that he would like detailed comments to be submitted to him rather than discussed on the call itself. Mr. Naughton remarked that he felt the introduction section was possibly too limiting in scope. His concern was that readers might get the impression that this research was just an exercise, given the wording that made it appear preliminary and limited in scope. Mr. Butler, Mr. Blackwell, and others noted that on the last call participants had agreed to refrain from taking any clear position on mode selection or potential mode selection for WIPP shipments, and the wording in question was designed to support that decision. Mr. Naughton's chief concern was that the work the Group is contributing could be used as a "blueprint" of sorts for other campaigns aside from WIPP, and that he did not want to see program planners return to "square one" rather than utilize the information this Group was compiling. Most participants acknowledged this concern, and agreed that the wording of the Introduction could be less restrictive without attempting to offer the document outright as a standard for all potential rail campaigns. Mr. Butler agreed to re-work the section.

Mr. Butler raised a question concerning the inclusion of the Evaluation sections throughout the document. He pointed out that since there are currently no plans to ship to WIPP by rail, it might be premature to construct Evaluation sections of similar detail to that included in the original WIPP-PIG given that those sections were quite prescriptive in entailing clear responsibilities for states and other actors to carry out. Participants agreed with this statement, but generally stated that not including Evaluation sections would significantly reduce the effectiveness of the companion. Mr. Naughton suggested that these sections be worded somewhat generically, and should merely suggest how the items developed in the Approach sections could be carried out. He agreed that mandates should be avoided.

Participants then discussed Section 6: Medical Preparedness. Those on the call generally agreed that there was no clear need to alter the section for the rail mode, because preparedness and planning needs and actions as described within the section did not appear substantively different for rail incidents. Nevertheless, the group decided to refer this section to the Medical Training Issues topic group to confirm that revision was unnecessary.

Discussion moved to Section 7: Mutual Aid Agreements. This section also did not immediately appear mode-specific in focus. Mr. Fronczak and others pointed out that this section referred specifically to agreements between governmental entities and not between governments and railroads, and therefore might not pertain specifically to the operations of rail carriers. Participants pointed out that private contingency plans in place with rail carriers take effect regardless of the status of mutual aid agreements in or between states. Mr. Butler suggested that perhaps the group should just endorse the need, approach, and evaluation methods for mutual aid agreements as stated within the original document. Mr. Naughton remarked that the focus of mutual aid agreements appeared to be on incidents that occur on or near border areas between two or more jurisdictions. Mr. Gilbert agreed with that remark, and added that the group should include a statement suggesting that the regional groups encourage local jurisdictions to develop mutual aid agreements if and when they do not exist generally or for the rail mode in particular. Participants felt that it should be pointed out in this section that rail carriers have plans in effect which delineate private and public responsibilities and define approach in event of a rail incident and that mutual aid agreements between governmental entities would only supplement these existing plans.

The group then went on to discuss Section 8: Emergency Response Plans & Procedures. Again, there was some discussion among participants as to the applicability of this section, given that it focuses on state emergency response plans. Mr. Butler mentioned that on a previous call he had discussed with Sandy Covi (UPRR) the possibility of including references to emergency response plans in place with Union Pacific (and possibly some other major carriers) as well as some summary information from those plans. Participants generally supported doing so; Mr. Fronczak pointed out that emergency response plans for hazardous materials shipped by railroads are fundamentally the same, and differ only slightly by waste type. Mr. Blackwell agreed, but pointed out that if the group were really to address the context of this section, it should gather more information as to how states treat rail specific transport in their emergency response planning rather than information on what the rail industry does. Participants agreed with this, but also felt that it should be made clear that since railroads take the initiative on response and provide the bulk of the resources, the state emergency plans are in essence supplementary. Mr. Gilbert suggested that the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects would be a good starting point to gather information on rail components within a state emergency response plan for transportation incidents.

The last section discussed was Section 9: Emergency Response Equipment. Participants noted that the terms "specialized" and "adequate" describing equipment was somewhat vague, and would be better defined as recovery equipment. Mr. Fronczak said that on his reading of the section the equipment of concern could be put into two categories: radiation detection and personal protective equipment. He suggested that those categories be expressly identified in the companion. Participants agreed that the requirement for detection and protection equipment were essentially the same regardless of mode, and decided to endorse the existing section with the exception of providing a fuller definition of the equipment needed.

Mr. Butler asked the group to use its remaining time to discuss the Executive Summary to the rail matrices that he had distributed. He remarked that this summary was created in response to a request in an action item from the July 1998 meeting. Participants approved of the content of the

summary, but questioned the necessity of creating such a lengthy document to accompany what are already comprehensive products. Mr. English stated the opinion that the group had pulled together a significant amount of information into a concise and accessible format, and attaching a summary of this type would be taking a step back from the original intent of the matrices. Mr. Butler agreed with this statement. Participants suggested that the "Background and Context..." section of the summary be used as an appendix to the matrices, and that the "Introduction" portion serve as the Executive Summary. It was agreed that this would meet the request of the action item while keeping the matrices accessible.

Mr. Butler thanked participants for their time, and the next call was scheduled for Friday, November 13 from 11:30-12:30 ET. An agenda will be distributed about one week prior to that date.